



Terra Cognita

Dispatches from an Over-Traveled Italy

CHAD DAVIDSON

Twenty-seven years in the making, *Terra Cognita* chronicles the author's continual travels—and problematic (if still, at times, ecstatic) encounters—in the “bel paese.” Across nine richly evocative essays, Chad Davidson investigates the seemingly never-ending fascination that travelers have with Italy.

As much a meditation on what home and away mean as it is a travel memoir, *Terra Cognita* finds literary predecessors such as Dante and Italo Calvino crowding in alongside more accustomed sights from travel shows, Hollywood films, and tourist guides. Though each essay departs from a particular location in Italy and remains rooted in the author's own history there, the book ultimately becomes less about those places and more about the placelessness any such journey can engender, how—even after flying across an ocean and landing in a foreign country—we are still hopelessly and fully ourselves.

CHAD DAVIDSON is the author of four collections of poems, most recently *Unearth*. His essays have appeared in *AGNI*, the *Antioch Review*, *Five Points*, and the *Gettysburg Review*. He directs the School of the Arts at the University of West Georgia near Atlanta and codirects Convivio, a summer writing conference in Postignano, Italy.

PRAISE FOR *TERRA COGNITA*

“In *Terra Cognita*, Chad Davidson clears a space for deeper, richer, far more profound questions and insights about Italy by seeing into the very conditions that render our sight dull and conventional.”—*Lia Purpura, author of All the Fierce Tethers and Rough Likeness*

“Davidson's skillful prose, deeply invested with humor and pathos, will complicate what you know—and what you think you know—about Italy.”—*Dionne Irving, author of Quint and The Islands*

“*Terra Cognita* will inspire readers to want to travel to Italy, and, by all means, discover their own truths, as well as find the astute meaningfulness that Davidson has wrought.”—*Allen Gee, author of My Chinese-America*

“It's impossible to imagine a better tour guide than Chad Davidson to show us the riches and ruins of Italy. In each of these bustling essays, Davidson veers through Italian cities and towns, brilliantly exploring not only each boots-on-the-ground place but also what lingers in the tourist's memory long after returning home.”—*Matt Donovan, author of A Cloud of Unusual Size and Shape: Meditations on Ruin and Redemption*



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